



Interactive session: Rural people innovating for a resilient future

Date and time: 15 February 2024, 15.00 – 16.30

Rural communities are rich sources of knowledge on how to deal with challenges such as managing ecosystems and climate change, and producing nutritious food in difficult conditions. During this session, Governors will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the realities of rural communities and IFAD's work on the ground with them. They will learn about innovations that work for rural people through first-hand accounts from across the world.

Background: Putting rural people at the centre of innovation

Rural people are among those most vulnerable to poverty and hunger. Innovation must be central to finding solutions to the challenges they face. But too often rural people's voices are absent from discussions on innovation and they are seen as passive recipients of innovations developed by others. Innovations must truly respond to the realities rural people are facing and must be shaped by rural people themselves. That is, we need an innovation agenda that is driven by rural people, for rural people.

Not only do we need more innovation in general, we also need specific innovations in the way we communicate. We need to prioritize tools and technologies to reach rural people and ensure that they are part of debates on innovation. We need innovation to reach rural people, to listen to them, and to bring their ideas to this agenda.

An example has been IFAD's Rural Voices initiative in which we and our partners have used radio as a tool to capture the ideas of rural people who would otherwise not have been heard. The session will showcase this initiative. It will take the audience into villages where people have participated both in Rural Voices and in IFAD-supported projects, allowing the audience to listen to how these experiences have changed their lives. It will also showcase selected innovations from IFAD-supported projects from around the world, giving audience members a chance to listen to and interact with rural people implementing these innovations. In the final segment, leading UK cook and food writer Sophie Grigson, part of IFAD's Recipes for Change programme, will join the event to talk about her recent visit to an IFAD-supported project in Malawi, where she was able to see first hand the impact of investment on rural people's lives.



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Format and main questions

The format will be a moderated discussion on the stage, involving representatives from IFAD's Rural Voices initiative, followed by a live virtual field trip from Ghana where rural people will speak to the audience and display innovations from their communities. Following this, the audience will hear about other innovations from IFAD project participants in other parts of the world. The audience will have an opportunity to ask questions and speak to the panellists on stage and the project participants via video

Examples of question include:

- What have rural people been telling us during the Rural Voices initiative?
- What kind of innovations are achieving impact for rural people today?
- What approaches are needed to ensure rural voices are central to shaping a global innovation agenda that delivers on the SDGs?
- What support do rural people need to implement and scale up solutions to the challenges they are facing?



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